

**AMC17 SS 18.4.89**

Q: I don't think I've actually read through your questionnaire because we've done so much since last week so some of it might overlap. Can you start off by telling me a bit about which you see as the most important relationships in your life, of all kinds of relationship?

A: My family?

Q: Yes, whatever.

A: Well the most important is yes, my family and some of my friends, is that what you mean?

Q: Yes, which do you think is..?

(interruption)

Q: Right, so your family and then your boyfriend; how long have you been going out with your boyfriend?

A: Two and a half years.

Q: And how old are you now?

A: I'm twenty.

Q: And is that the first long relationship?

A: No, I used to go out with somebody ..(017)..

Q: And how old was he?

A: Well the one I went out with before, he was a couple of years older than me. .. (20)..

Q: That's the way it goes. And the one you went out with for four years, was that your first boyfriend?

A: No, well it was the first really serious. I've had quite a few really, just friends really.

Q: What about your family, brothers, sisters?

A: Yes, just my parents and my sister.

Q: And are you living at home or is home somewhere else?

A: Somewhere else...(027)..

Q: [COUNTY]

A: They have only just moved actually. About six months ago. We used to live in Sheffield.

Q: I was going to say that doesn't sound like a [TOWN] accent that you've got at all. Do you live on your own up here or..?

A: Well I live at ... halls of residence. I share a room with ....

Q: I think you are the first person I've interviewed in this research who is not actually living with her parents. That's quite interesting. Do you feel good about leaving home?

A: Uhm, I get homesick but I'm glad I've done it. I have learnt a lot more. You realise there is something else outside your home life. Meeting people and I'm glad because I think you should stand on your own two feet. You still rely on your parents for certain things but..

Q: I'm sure I still rely on mine.

A: I regret it in certain aspects, but then again I think if I hadn't left home I would be wanting to so at least I know.

Q: So what you do regret, missing that closeness?

A: Yes. Just missing the home life.

Q: Yes living in a hall of residence isn't the same is it at all.

A: A little bit different.

Q: Is your boyfriend up here?

A: No he's in Sheffield. It's a bit difficult.

Q: So you met him before you came to college?

A: Yes; before my parents moved away as well.

Q: So how do you actually manage that?

A: Well I usually go to Sheffield nearly every weekend, and every three or four weeks I'll go home. I've just been home actually this weekend. I'll be going to Sheffield next weekend.

Q: Where do you stay when you go to Sheffield?

A: I stay at my boyfriends, well he's living with his parents so I stay at their house.

Q: Right. So that's OK?

A: Oh yes.

Q: Shall we leave that bit and come back to that. I'm just interested really in how much knowledge and information people have about AIDS and HIV. Can you tell me what you know about AIDS; what do you think the difference is between AIDS and HIV for instance?

A: Well is HIV just the actual virus that you get and AIDS is like the full blown, I'm not sure but I think it's that.

Q: Yes, it's just lots of people are very confused about what the difference is. Where, in so far as you know anything about AIDS, where have you got your information from?

A: Well mainly the media I think and we do quite a lot of it, well a little bit in electrolysis.

Q: Yes so what does that consist of?

A: Well really ....(63).. sterilisation. She told us a little bit about AIDS and.. and how it's passed on.

Q: So tell me that; how you think you can get it?

A: Well, the first one I knew about was the sexual ..(66).. and blood, open wounds, and that's it. If you have a blood transfusion with contaminated blood. It's not anything like kissing, sitting on dirty seats.

Q: The British obsession with toilet seats, yes. So when you say sex what do you mean specifically?

A: Well intercourse without a condom.

Q: So not kissing or cuddling or whatever. What about using needles, have you heard about that?

A: As in electrolysis?

Q: Well that, but also drug use as well.

A: Well yes there is that. ..(77).. I'm aware of it, and aware of how it's passed on using dirty needles and everything.

Q: But you ..(80).. so nobody you know is involved in using drugs?

A: No.

Q: Do you have a sense of what sort of people might be at risk of getting AIDS?

A: Well gay people, I think the main group is like a say the gays.

Q: Do you think it has actually spread so that other people can get it now?

A: Yes.

Q: Can you imagine anybody you know ever having AIDS?

A: I can't think of anyone I know that are at high risk. No-one I know uses drugs, no-one I know is gay. No-one I know.

Q: Not as far as you know anyway.

A: Not as....(96).. you know having different partners every week, so no not really.

Q: Does that make you feel it doesn't really affect you?

A: Oh no, I still worry about it. Especially with electrolysis and things like that. I stabbed myself with some tweezers the other day and I was absolutely frantic. Because it brought blood out; I was rushing around, if it's there it's there. I still worry.

Q: ..(102)...

A: It still worries you doesn't it.

Q: Is it something.. I don't want to assume.. Are you having a sexual relationship with your boyfriend?

A: Yes.

Q: Is it something you think about in relation to that?

A: Well I know he's not had anyone before me.. so I don't worry about him. Before that I had ..(108).. boy that I went out with before. He is the most worry because with him being older than me I knew he had been with other girls before. But not ..(111).

Q: Right so you just don't know the answer to that. Does it worry you a lot or do you just think there is nothing I can do about it?

A: Well, not... If we talk about it or anything I always think at the back of my mind, there is always that risk isn't there.

Q: I mean I'm not trying to worry you, the chances are pretty slim I would have thought. How would you feel; say you've got involved with somebody else, would you want to know who else they had slept with?

A: Oh yes, definitely.

Q: How do you think you would set about finding that out, because that is one of the things that is always said in the adverts?

A: Well for a start I wouldn't ..(121).. sort of thing. I would have to get to know him a few months before if anything actually happened so hopefully by that time I would know a bit about his background.

Q: For other reasons rather than asking straight out, yes.

A: ..(126).. you know decide from there.

Q: Do you use any contraception?

A: Yes.

Q: What the pill?

A: Yes.

Q: How long have you been using that?

A: About two years.

Q: Did you start using it when you were with the previous bloke?

A: Yes.

Q: Did you have sex with him before that?

A: Just once. We used a condom. Even when I did go on the pill I didn't do it often. We probably did it about five times in total. ...(134)..

Q: And why was that; do you not like it very much or did you worry about it?

A: Well I was young at the time, and he was older so like, well not forced me but pushing me sort of thing. And I just kept saying no, no, because I was too young and everything.

Q: So how old were you at this point when it first came up on the agenda?

A: About sixteen yes. ..(140).... We kept splitting up during that time anyway, it wasn't as if I was going to marry him and everything. I think he got a bit impatient though. It was a mutual decision in the end.

Q: It was something that you weren't very happy about. What about your present boyfriend, did you feel that this was a different sort of relationship?

A: Yes. I mean we waited a couple of months but even then I felt he was different, so. I don't know it just seemed natural to do it, it didn't seem natural with the previous boyfriend.

Q: Maybe you felt pressurised?

A: With ROBERT it was as if we both wanted to, not like just him.

Q: Is that the case in your relationship generally that you feel it is more equal, if you like?

A: Oh yes. He has got stronger opinions than I have, sometimes, well quite often we clash, but in the end we both respect one another.

Q: If there is a decision to be made how do you make the decision?

A: I suppose it depends what it's about. I don't know really. It depends because if he's talking about.. Well at the moment he has got a car and everything and we were going to be saving up to get a flat when I leave college.

Q: In Sheffield?

A: Yes. And he has gone out and he said he was going to sell his other car and pay off the loan and instead he has gone off the idea of getting a flat. He says - wait till I've got a job and then we can afford it - and he's gone out and got another loan so he has got two loans and he's got another car you see. I mean he asked my opinion and I told him I said, - no I don't want you to - and then in the end it's his choice because it's his money.

Q: And if he doesn't feel ready to have a flat then you don't want to push him I suppose?

A: Well I think he was ready it was just that he couldn't afford it just on his wage anyway and he wants to wait for us both to get a wage, even if he's still got two loans to pay off. But in the end it's his money and he's earned it.

Q: What does he do, what sort of work?

A: He works in [CIVIL SERVICE ROLE] just in the office but he wants to finish that soon. He wants to go into [UNIFORMED SERVICE]. Like his brother and his father.

Q: Oh gosh. It runs in the family. Do you expect the relationship to last?

A: Yes. Well I thought if it's going to last, it's going to last. The most difficult part was when I was coming to college and being apart from him and I think that was

the worst part. Maybe it has made us closer, I don't know. If we are not together we're not arguing.

Q: You get chance to miss each other don't you and appreciate it when you do see each other.

A: Oh yes. That's true. I'm just worried that when we do get the chance to be together all the time that it doesn't fizzle out.

Q: There is only one way to find out. So you are planning to try and get a job in Sheffield, is that what you want to do?

A: Yes.

Q: Any idea what?

A: Well I eventually want to go onto sales, but what I get in the meantime I'll just try and get what I can.

Q: So that means you are looking to get into a big company eventually?

A: Well we were planning, in about another six months or whatever, to go to America, whether it is just for six months or just for the experience I think before we settle down and everything. Because I want to go and he wants to go and if he had his own way he'd go on his own. I said if you go on your own I won't be here waiting for you!

Q: He wants to go on his own?

A: Not that he wants to go on his own but he would like to go now, you know what I mean. He has got the chance of going with his sister and brother in law in June but I don't want to.

Q: Is that because you feel you wouldn't go on your own?

A: No I'm just worried that he will meet somebody else. I mean he's been on holiday with his friends before and I have, and nothing happened but if he does for quite a while. He wouldn't like me to go so I ..(207)..

Q: Yes, seems fair.

A: Selfish really.

Q: But on the other hand you can't hold on to people by stopping them doing things. That was the next thing I was going to ask you was about other friendships. It is obviously quite difficult really because you can only see him at weekends, do you think that that means that you don't see as much of other friends?

A: Oh yes, definitely. ..(212).. mainly at Easter when I stayed for the full week because he was at work all day and then he would come home. I would have been doing my work during the day and we were just sitting in the house, do you know what I mean, and he could always go out with his friends and then I would phone my friend up and she's already doing something, do you know what I mean, and I thought, it's selfish of me thinking well why should she be available because I hadn't phoned her for goodness knows how long, so why should I expect her to be free all of a sudden when I want her. And it upset me that.

Q: It's a hard lesson to learn that one isn't it.

A: Well the last week I went back and I wanted to see ROBERT at the weekend but I knew my friends would be home and they knew I'd rang them.

Q: So you have other friends that are away at college as well?

A: Oh yes they are away at college. And they said - oh we're going out so although I wanted to stay with ROBERT because I hadn't seen him for that week, I said I'm going, I made the effort so I went out. I think it makes you closer together as well because you have got different things to talk about.

Q: What is it like staying with his family, are they quite happy about, they know what your relationship is like?

A: Oh yes. Sometimes I get mad with ROBERT because he doesn't like coming to Manchester. I mean he can always come to Manchester and stay here, but he doesn't like it, so when I go to their house I feel as though I have to be nice and polite all the time.

Q: It's a strain.

A: But he doesn't like coming to Manchester.

Q: What doesn't he like about it?

A: It just depresses him. I suppose it's being stuck in that room really. It depresses me that.

Q: How would you organise it if you share a room with ALISON, what would you do if he came?

A: Well ALISON usually goes home every weekend, we usually go home every weekend so the room is usually free. But if not we would just take alternate. But it's not that I don't enjoy going to Sheffield, I do, I prefer to go to Sheffield than ROBERT come to Manchester it's just, I feel as though..

Q: You're on your best behaviour.

A: Yes. I like going to Sheffield because I can see my other relations as well. He was supposed to be coming over this weekend but the problem of the car, surprise surprise, so that's another weekend gone out of the window.

Q: Also it means you are not spending weekends in Manchester getting to know other people here isn't it?

A: Yes that's true, I don't really know anybody from the halls this year. Last year I knew quite a few people, there was quite a few people from ....(252).. this year they've moved into houses. I don't really know many. I mean I say hello to, but not to have a chat to. I mean if ALISON weren't there, there is nobody that I could go out with or something.

Q: Do you go out with ALISON during the week?

A: If we go out which is very rare. We are usually bogged down with work.

Q: It sounds like they work you quite hard on this course.

A: We usually go to bed about nine o'clock.

Q: Sounds like me.

A: And there's a couple of lads next door and they usually go out and come back about two o'clock in the morning...

Q: What about, you said you were on the pill, how do you feel about being on the pill, are you quite happy about that?

A: I don't know. At first I was but every time I get a headache or there is something wrong with me I always think oh God, it might be the pill or something. Sometimes my mood changes or I don't know if that's due to it but I always think it is.

Q: Is that new, has that just happened since you were on it?

A: It just started happening since I came to college.

Q: Well there's a lot of things going on.

A: Yes, there are a lot of things that I could put it to but I put it down to... well I always think it could be this, it could be the pill. In a way I wish there was another form that I rely on. I won't feel safe coming off it just using a condom or something. My Auntie, she had a coil fitted and she's had problems so I'm not keen on that. It's just that there's no other form that is as safe as the pill, that I'd feel comfortable in using, I don't think.

Q: Right, so you've not thought of trying a cap?

A: I don't know that I'd be able to rely on it.

Q: It's getting much more popular. Well if you're using it with a spermicide, they are very nearly. The difference is pretty minimal. Are you on a low dose pill?

A: Yes.

Q: Yes, the difference is tiny. Anyway, I'm not telling you what to do.

A: No. I don't know.

Q: Where do you get your pills; from the doctor or from the family planning?

A: From my doctor.

Q: I generally think it's worth going to family planning and talking to them because I mean they are the experts, they do it all the time. GPs only do family planning, contraception a bit of the time anyway, so it sounds like you're not a hundred percent happy?

A: No. I mean I know it's reliable, that's why I use it and then again like everything...(293).. especially if I'm feeling down.

Q: Well it's your body. Just talking about those sorts of things and condoms and such like, aside from their reliability, can you imagine using condoms otherwise or would you be quite happy to use condoms if they were suddenly a hundred percent safe?

A: A hundred percent safe, yes well I would. I don't know if ROBERT would.

Q: Have you ever talked to him about it?

A: Well I mean we use condoms right at the beginning. I don't know at the beginning though I mean when you are getting aroused you have to suddenly stop and, you know, I think it kills it really and he said he enjoys it more without so. For me it doesn't make any difference really apart from having to wait for him to put it on sort of thing. Otherwise apart from that, if it was a hundred percent, I would be quite prepared to use it.

Q: You think he wouldn't be sure?

A: I don't know, if he knew as well it was a hundred percent sure, but they are not are they.

Q: They are a lot safer if you use spermicide with them as well of course. That's a sort of extra...

A: It's easier I suppose just to take a pill, and not think about it and then again, what are you doing to your body, that's the problem. It's like everything...(318)...

Q: Dead right there, absolutely right. What do you think about women carrying condoms?

A: It depends what kind of woman it is I think. I mean if she's promiscuous..

Q: What would you mean by promiscuous? What would your definition be?

A: A different.. Well having intercourse after you've probably known him for about a week or something. I mean you'd have to have known him for a few months, in my opinion, to not be promiscuous.

Q: Yes, I'm interested in what you mean by it.

A: I don't only think women you have intercourse with different men every night, promiscuous, I think women that have one every week or every month are, you know....(333)...

Q: So you think sex is something that develops out of a relationship?

A: Oh yes, I don't think it's just.. I don't know .... if you have it one night and you don't ..... I like to think that you ...(336).. in my opinion.

Q: Say a bit more about that, because if I said to you what do you mean by sex, you tell me what it is?

A: Sex is just physical, having ..(342).. I would like to think... I don't like to think it's all physical and emotional ..

Q: In terms of what you might actually do, do you think of making love or of actual intercourse or do you think..

A: Everything. Yes, everything really, it's not just.. even just kissing, not just intercourse.

Q: So if I said to you what would you think of as safe sex, say you weren't in this relationship and there was a risk where you were anxious what would you think would be safe sex?

A: If I didn't have a serious relationship and I was having sex with someone else, I would make sure I used a condom. I mean I would just make sure you have proper protection and that's it really.

Q: But then presumably you would also think all those other things, the kissing, the cuddling, and everything that would also be safe, do you see what I mean?

A: Yes. Difficult isn't it. I mean safe as in?

Q: Well not likely to catch anything by doing it?

A: I mean you can't really catch anything by kissing anyway can you. And cuddling.

Q: Most people only see sex as one thing, that's what I'm trying to sort of get at really.

(interruption)

Q: Yes so you see what I mean about the definition.

A: Yes. I'm quite prepared to kiss somebody who I didn't know deeply and probably cuddle but nothing else.

Q: Something else could be risky or could lead to things. What do you think about the information there is around about AIDS? The posters and the things in the papers, I don't know how much you've seen.

A: They are a bit frightening but I mean they've got to be frightening to stop people.

Q: Do you think they are helpful?

A: Yes, yes. They are helpful but they worry you. ..(392).. get the message across.. make you panic.

Q: The trouble is sometimes if you panic you want to blot it out of your mind which isn't always helpful.



A: I think it's made people more aware and think more about using protection than what they would have done before.

Q: To move towards finishing, do you see yourself as someone who takes risks at all, I don't just mean in relation to sex, I mean in life in general?

A: No. I am very pessimistic. If I'm not sure about anything.

Q: You think you play safe?

A: Oh yes.

Q: Do you smoke or drink or?

A: Well I don't smoke, I drink moderately, not excessively.

Q: What do you mean by moderately then? What might you drink on a Saturday night say?

A: On a Saturday, oh about five white wines. I usually fall down after that.

Q: You can't drink any more!

A: I'm paralytic by that time.

Q: And then you forget to take the pill.

A: Oh no, never. ROBERT thinks I'm paranoid because I check it about five times and I ask him to check that I've took it about five times.

Q: When I was on the pill I never forgot either. You don't see yourself as a big risk taker?

A: No.

Q: I mean in terms of sport or things like that, do you do anything much like that?

A: I did when I was at school. Netball.

Q: Anything like abseiling or rock climbing, that sort of thing?

A: I quite fancy parachuting or something like that. Yes. I suppose I do take a few risks. I mean I like scary, like rides, really big, ROBERT's petrified. So I suppose in that sense I like that excitement.

Q: If I asked you to categorise yourself and say what sort of person you felt you were, it's a very difficult question; what would you say to me. If you had to put yourself in a sort of group like some people identify with certain kinds of music or style or some people say - I'm working class and proud of it - or whatever, what would you say about yourself? Maybe there's nothing, I am not saying there has to be?

A: No I can't think of anything. Like I say I'm pessimistic.

Q: Is that something other people say about you?

A: Well I know myself. If there is a situation that can go two ways, I always look on the worst side.

Q: Look on the black side, oh right. Well here's a chance to be really pessimistic, what do you think might happen to you over the next five years. What would you hope for or expect?

A: What would I hope for? Well I hope to make a career first of all; I hope to get married; I would like to have children eventually but probably not in the next five years but eventually. Just have a nice steady lifestyle really, something to be proud of. I suppose that's not really pessimistic.

Q: No I wasn't saying you should be pessimistic. So what do you expect from your career?

A: Money. A car. Just job satisfaction really. Something that, to do something I really enjoy.

Q: What would you do, for instance, let me give you a for instance. Say you get a job in Sheffield right, and you get a flat together eventually and then whoever you are working for offers you promotion, but you have to move to London.

A: ..(397).. See as my mum and dad have to do it, you know ROBERT says .. (393).. He's talked about this anyway because when I'm looking for a job, ..... came up in London anyway but he said he'd be prepared to move, you know if he could get a job as well.

Q: So he's thinking about change?

A: Yes. He said he would be prepared to ..

Q: What does he actually want to do, does he know, what he wants to get into?

A: Well like I say, eventually the [UNIFORMED SERVICES].

Q: He could train to do that in lots of places?

A: Yes.

Q: [TRAINING CENTRE] is probably where he would end up. Right so you have talked about it. But can you imagine putting your career first and saying - right well I'm going to London, even if he wouldn't or couldn't?

A: I don't know, I don't think so.

Q: It's a hard question. You don't know if it would happen.

A: I suppose it depends on how your relationship develops and once you start living together if you think oh is this what life is, you know, you think oh no, and then an opportunity came up and you weren't prepared to move, and then I thought well I'm not living like this for the rest of my life, ...

Q: Take the risk, yes.

A: It depends on what your relationship's like. If you enjoy ..... Like my dad he's got a new job travelling abroad and my mum is home quite a lot and I think oh is it worth it for that..

Q: And she's left all her friends and..

A: Yes and relations. So .....

Q: Did your mum feel that she just had to do it or she wanted to do it?

A: She wanted to do it because she didn't want, she felt she didn't want to stop my dad from doing something he has always wanted. I mean he's been working for it all his life, so you know, she didn't want to jeopardise it. My dad wanted to do it because there was nowhere else he could go in that firm anyway without moving. So maybe even after a few years if they decide to come back at least they have had that opportunity.

Q: How do they feel about you, are they happy with the relationship you're in or?

A: I think so.

Q: Do they want you to settle down or do they want you not to?

A: I don't know, they don't really say much. They don't tell me everything.

Q: Do they know you are on the pill, they know you are having a sexual relationship?

A: Well my mum does, I don't know about my dad.

Q: Well fathers know things and don't know things don't they, quite often?

A: Yes quite. .... They had me quite young so whether that's made them more strict, you know, because they probably think .....

Q: What like them?

A: Well I mean my mum had me when she was eighteen so I don't mean they regretted it but ....

Q: They would like you to work ... first?

A: Yes.

End of Interview